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Members Memoirs

*Ninetieth Anniversary
and*

Homecoming

November 18-20, 1994

FIRST FREE WILL BAPTIST CHURCH

Tenth and Bridges Street
Morehead City, North Carolina 28557



Mance R. Cason, Pastor

"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God."

1 Cor. 1:18

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Members memoirs; ninetieth anniversary

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Morehead City
North Carolina

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Office Of The Mayor

PROCLAMATION

TO

FIRST FREEWILL BAPTIST CHURCH

UPON THE
90TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CHURCH

WHEREAS, Sunday, November 20, 1994, marks the 90th Anniversary of First Freewill Baptist Church, 10th and Bridges Streets, Morehead City, N. C., which was dedicated to the service of God and humanity by Reverend L. C. Garner and Reverend Denard Garner and a small group of dedicated members; and

WHEREAS, we give pause, honor and praise this day for the deep and abiding Christian commitment of those who in faith began this work, and for all those who have given so unselfishly during these many years to help the work grow and thrive, and provide valuable human services where the need was great; and

WHEREAS, our entire community has benefited from the fine Christian influence this church has exerted through the years, and the many facets of its outreach and practical assistance to the needy; and

WHEREAS, it is a pleasure to extend this expression of our esteem and best wishes to Rev. Dr. Mance R. Cason, Pastor, and members of this congregation on the memorable occasion of this 90th Anniversary;

NOW, THEREFORE, on behalf of the authority vested in me as Mayor and on behalf of the Town Council of the Town of Morehead City, N. C., I extend sincere congratulations and best wishes for many more years of continuous service. I further provide that a copy of this tribute be presented to the congregation in testimony of the high regard in which this church is held in the Town of Morehead City.



W. C. Horton
Dr. W. C. Horton, Mayor

ATTEST:
Jeanne T. Spencer
Jeanne T. Spencer, City Clerk

P.O. Drawer M, 706 Arendell Street, Morehead City, NC 28557
Tel. (919) 726-6848, Fax (919) 726-2367



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
RALEIGH 27603-8001

JAMES B. HUNT JR.
GOVERNOR

October 31, 1994

First Free Will Baptist Church
P. O. Box 866
Morehead City, NC 28557

Dear Friends:

As Governor of the State of North Carolina, it is indeed my pleasure to congratulate you on your Ninetieth Anniversary which you will be celebrating on November 20, 1994.

Your superlative efforts, hard work and dedication to the ministering of the spiritual needs of the people in the Morehead Community have earned you this special day of celebration.

Congratulations on your fine work. Carolyn and I send our best wishes and may the future bring you only happiness and success.

My warmest personal regards.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James B. Hunt Jr."

JBH:emc

Great Is Thy Faithfulness:

Thomas Chisholm, sometime during his 94 years of life wrote a song of which pictures the faithful people of 1904 when the Atlantic Free Will Baptist Church (known today as First Free Will Baptist) was organized and all the faithful members here in 1994.

We continue the dedication written by Missionary Molly Barker and the challenge of our 14th pastor Reverend William Reagan who wrote the following challenge in the 75th Anniversary booklet.

"To God be the glory, amen! That the First Free Will Baptist Church still stands as a "Fortress for the Faith" and adheres to the Word of God and its only source of Faith and Practice is indeed to the Glory of God and by His grace. We can see by these reflections of our past that the Lord uses human instruments to do His bidding. We don't understand some things, but do know, that as for God, His way is perfect. The outlook for the future is that "He must increase and we must decrease".

R. S. Cushman once wrote:

*"What care I who gets the credit?
Only let the work be done.*

*Christ Himself will handle credits
with the setting of the sun.
Praise or blame, what does it matter?
Rise above them every day;
Soul, you'll never win a battle
if you fear what people say.
Keep your eyes on the Lord, ye Christians
People praise and people blame,
Sometimes cheer and sometimes chide you,
Speak the message just the same.
While the world is sick and waiting
for the something I can be
Help me, Lord, in stress--in struggle
just to keep my eyes on Thee".*

Paul said "Forgetting those things which are behind, I press for the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus".

Praying that we will press for that mark, I am Yours and His,

William Reagan"

Brothers L.C. Garner and Denard Garner were pioneer preachers along with Brothers J.E. Sawyer, Bryant Wells, Warden Lewis, John Sewell, Cal Merrill, John Alford, ^{Howard} and Vernon Lloyd, faithfully preaching from 1904 to 1919.

The following is copied from the Seventy-fifth Anniversary Booklet:

The First Free Will Baptist Church of Morehead City, NC was organized ninety years ago at the writing of this booklet.

It is believed that Brother Denard Garner came to Morehead City and led monthly worship services in the homes of Free Will Baptist who had moved there.

These people had come from Pamlico County, Bogue, and back of Beaufort on the old New Bern highway #101.

In 1904, the church was organized and named ATLANTIC FREE WILL BAPTIST CHURCH with apparently twenty charter members. John Rodgers was the first church clerk.

PROBABLE CHARTER MEMBERS

Jim and wife Virginia Daniels

Lon and wife Lina Daniels

Fulford and wife Mary Fodris

Mrs. Deanie Fulford

Mrs. S. H. Hughes

Radford and wife Sally Purifoy

John Rodgers

Miss Boneta Smith

Cannon and wife Frances Smith

Joel and wife Mary Virginia Smith

Ezekiel and wife Effie Williams

Benjamin Williams

Mrs. O. B. Willis (Caddie)

OTHER EARLY MEMBERS

Neal and wife Pearl Davis

Mrs. Lula Springle Jenkins

Mrs. Emma Marks

Hertford and wife Sally McIntosh

Cal Merrill

Fulford and wife Ellie Merrill

Ben and wife Ula Rice

J. B. Sawyer

Joe and wife Ann Slade

John and wife Lina Wetherington

The Minutes of the Ninth Annual Session of the Eastern Conference of the Original Free Will Baptist, recorded this new church "Atlantic" requested and was granted membership in the Conference on October 20, 1904.

E.Z. Williams was the first delegate for the Atlantic Free Will Baptist church at the Eastern Conference of 1904. He reported for the first church year: Number of members 19, baptized 1, excommunicated 2. He brought 50 cents for the Minutes Fund and 50 cents for the Retired Minister Fund from his church.

On March 21, 1905, the trustees, J.A. Daniels, E.Z. Williams, and Cannon Smith purchased the lot 1007 Fisher Street for \$70.00 from Tom Webb, who was the representative of the Shepherd Point Land Company.

Upon this Fisher Street lot, Benjamin Willis, Jim Daniels, Lon Daniels and Fulford Fodrie built a small, one room, white, frame church. (Recently, Brother Fodrie's granddaughter described him as "being a Free Will Baptist slam down to the bone").

There were at least nine men who preached in this church building for the struggling Free Will Baptist group. They were: J.E. Sawyer, Bryant Wells, Warden Lewis, John Sewell, Cal Merrill, John Alford, Vernon-Lloyd, Fate Garner and

Lloyd Vernon

Denard Garner. They were paid mostly with food donations of vegetables, live chickens or pigs, and small amounts of cash.

Around 1912, Mrs. Alice Lupton came from New Bern, N.C. and helped the women organize a Ladies Aid. Mrs. Deanie Fulford was the first President and her sister Mrs. Caddie Willis, Vice President.

It is believed Dr. St. Claire, a blind preacher and teacher from Ayden, N.C. came to the church about this time and organized a "Sabbath School". Neal Davis was probably the first official Sunday School Superintendent when he joined a short time later.

In 1918, Reverends H.M. and Lizzie McAdams came for a Revival. These services were held in a tent set up on the corner of 8th and Evans Streets. God blessed the "fine preaching" of Mrs. Lizzie and several town folks were saved and joined the Atlantic Free Will Baptist Church. Three of these were: Miss Durlie Irland (Mrs. W.I. Salter), Miss Clara Fulford (Mrs. Clara Wade), and Mrs. Neal Davis. Reverends McAdams encouraged and helped the Free Will Baptist people to buy the north east corner lot of 10th and Bridges Streets.

In 1918, the trustees of the Atlantic Free Will Baptist Church made this property purchase from Mrs. H.O. Phillips, Sr. and sons for \$1100.00.

Later that year, the one room church building was moved from the Fisher Street property to this new location.

In the early fall of 1919, the Atlantic Free Will Baptist Church took a "giant step" of faith. They called Reverend A.H. Outlaw--its first full-time pastor with a salary of \$15.00 a week.

Reverend Outlaw roomed with the Joe Slade family at 1006 Bridges Street and boarded at the Willis Inn around the corner on 10th Street.

The Minutes of the Twenty-fourth Annual Session of the Eastern Conference recorded the name change from "Atlantic" to Morehead City on October 25, 1919. Also, the trustees empowered to sell the old church lot on Fisher Street ad apply the proceeds of sale to the new lot on Bridges Street.

On October 24, 1921, Reverend Outlaw married Miss Lena Dickinson. That winter they lived in Ayden, N.C. where he studied at the Old Seminary. They commuted each Sunday to Morehead City for services. When Seminary was out, they returned to Morehead City. His salary was raised to \$18.00 a week.

The Lord blessed during the four years Reverend Outlaw was pastor. The church was painted,

furnished with a piano, pulpit set, carpet, modern communion service, good lights, cement sidewalk and steps, 1400 pound bell, new stove and chimney, and Free Will Baptist song books. The plain glass windows were covered giving it a real church appearance according to *THE FREE WILL BAPTIST* August 30, 1922. But more important, the church family grew from 50 to 100 members, the Sunday School from an average attendance of 35 to 100 or more, an inactive Ladies Aid to an active one and formed Primary, Junior and Senior F.W.B. Leagues. The church had raised approximately \$9,000.00 for local work and denominational institutions such as the Orphanage at Middlesex.

Miss Verona Roberts, now Mrs. Rufus Oglesby, played a pump organ for a short time and later the piano for the services during Reverend Outlaw's ministry.

In 1922, Mr. and Mrs. A.E. Cannon and Mr. and Mrs. Joe Hall had their membership transferred from the Free Will Baptist Church in Lukens, N.C. to the Morehead City Free Will Baptist Church.

Reverend Outlaw resigned in August of 1923 to take the pastorate of St. Mary's in New Bern, N.C.

Reverend Thomas Beamon came to pastor the church in 1924. God blessed the church. Two Sunday School rooms were built on the back of the one room building. Leb Buck and A.E. Canon worked in their spare time during the week and on Saturday afternoons for about a year to complete this addition. They also built a raised platform in the auditorium.

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The house and lot of 804 North 11th Street was purchased by the church about 1925 from Joe Slade. (Actually, Joe had built the house for his family and a hat shop (which was the reason for the two front doors)). The Beamon family was the first to use it as a parsonage.

Brother Beamon resigned in 1928. However, the church had reached its peak membership of 105 in 1927.

By October of 1928, Reverend W.B. Everett had come to pastor the Morehead City church. We do not know if they had revised the church roll or not, but the number of members recorded in the Minutes of the Thirty-third Annual Session of the Eastern Conference was only 82. However, their \$15.00 contribution to the conference was the same as the previous year.

Brother Everett married Willie Marks, Jr. and Miss Letha Eubanks who had both been saved

during the 1920 Revival when Reverend R.V. (Bob) Self of West Asheville, N. C. preached. It is believed that the Tea Room was opened by the Ladies Aid while Brother Everett was pastor. They sold pies, cakes, candy, and best remembered by all were the delicious applejacks made from dried apples. Two of our women, who were just young girls then, remember "turning applejacks by the hour for their mothers". Mrs. Emma Marks, Mrs. Ethel Boyd Scott, Mrs. A.E. Cannon, Mrs. Leb Buck, and Mrs. Rena Hall are only a few who helped in the Tea Room.

As in most places, after the Wall Street crash in 1929, the two banks in Morehead City closed. The church folks had financial difficulties but they determined together that the church would remain open for the Glory of God.

By 1930, the church membership grew to 90 and then the following year to 91.

About this time, Mrs. Ethel Boyd Scott made vegetable soup and sold it for 5 cents a bowl at Camp Glenn School. Different ones donated things for the soup and the proceeds went to help pay the pastor and buy literature.

After Brother Everett resigned in 1933, the church called Reverend Luke Wetherington.

Times were very hard and the next few years the church struggled along. From the Minutes of the Thirty-eighth Annual Session of the Eastern Conference, we found that 20 had been dismissed so the membership dropped to 75. Apparently the inactive members were removed from the roll.

Reverend W.E. Anderson served the Morehead City Free Will Baptist Church faithfully from 1935 to 1947. His was the longest pastorate in the history of the church until this present day.

First Visitation Program was started in October of 1938. A committee, Mrs. Caddie Willis, Mrs. L. Cannon, and Mrs. Bruce Rice, was appointed in the Business Meeting of the church to make personal visits to the inactive church members.

At the Business Meeting of April 3, 1940, Asa Cannon gave a talk on Tithing. To help the church financially, "friendly letters" were sent to out of town members and inactive members in town to remind them they were missed and that the church needed their presence and financial support.

About this time, Mrs. Myrtle Simpson came into the church and became very active. She worked as a teacher, played the piano, and helped in any way possible.

The little church tried to help others. Reverend Anderson was given permission to preach once a month at Cedar Island. The Ladies Aid sent linens to the Orphanage at Middlesex, N.C. The Foreign Mission offering was up to \$8.05. The church gave 25 cents per member to the Retired Minister Fund.

At the close of 1946, the following officers were elected: Trustees were Asa Cannon, Dorcey Rice, and Willie Marks, Jr. Deacons were B.L. West, W.E. Carmack, O.G. Brinson, and J.R. Swanson. Clerk was Harold Scripture, and Treasurer was Mrs. Helen Jenkins.

In 1945, Albert McElmon, a young Marine from up north stationed at Cherry Point, N.C., attended the Morehead City Free Will Baptist Church. About a year later, Reverend Anderson gave him one of the daughters of the church, Miss Marie Rice, in holy matrimony. Since then, they have served the Lord faithfully side by side, holding many offices of responsibility in the church. A few of these were General Sunday School Superintendent (about 30 years), Choir Director (about 30 years), both served as members of the Official Board, Sunday School Teacher, Choir member, etc.

Reverend Anderson retired in October of 1947.

It was under Reverend and Mrs. Griffin's leadership, the church became more informed and involved in the National Association of Free Will Baptist. For example, during his ministry Leon Styron was licensed to preach and became the first of nineteen sons and daughters of the church to attend the Free Will Baptist Bible College in Nashville, Tennessee. At least two more have gone to other Christian colleges.

Charles Barker joined the church in 1947 on his profession of faith in Christ. His membership had been in Lukens, N.C, but the church had moved or dissolved.

Brother Griffin brought more organization to the church. A Workers Council was formed composed of the church officers and the Sunday School teachers. O.G. Brinson, B.L. West, Prentise Salter, and J. Kirkman were appointed ushers. Robert Parker, William Lloyd Davis, and C.H. Barker were ordained ruling elders. The church voted to use weekly bulletins for services. A "Building Fund" was started with A. Cannon as treasurer.

Due to poor health, Brother Griffin resigned December of 1948. God had blessed. Church membership was 144.

In January, 1949, the church was remodeled. Two Sunday School rooms were added to the side of the auditorium. Reverend W.K. Jordan accepted the pastorate and then resigned in the early part of 1949.

By September, the new pastor Reverend J.A. Harris and family had arrived in Morehead City. Their specialty was music. The choir sang its first Cantata directed by Albert McElmon. Reverend Harris helped and encouraged Brother Al. Results were Brother Al is completing 30 years as Choir Director this year 1979.

Reverend Harris resigned and Reverend T.C. Smith came in October, 1950.

In 1951, the church windows were screened. Asa Cannon, often seen dodging and swatting "flying critters" while singing in the choir, was chairman of this committee to screen the windows. He was helped by Manley Styron and Dan Bell. (If there were only one bug in the church it seemed to seek and find "Uncle Asie" much to the delight of the children).

Reverend Noah Brown came to pastor the church in October, 1952. Under his ministry, the two storied, 50' X 32', brick Education Building was

added to the church. Leb Buck tore down the old Sunday School rooms on the back of the auditorium to make room for the new building. The following men and more worked on the building: Henry Goodwin, Gus Mason, A. Cannon, Bonnie Rice, Troy, Cyrus and Steve Hunter, Charlston Garner, Willie Marks, Jr., Bill Lovick, Al McElmon, Charlie Barker, and Cecil Sewell, the grandson of John Sewell who preached in the early years of the church.

On November 28, 1955, a motion was made to add "First" to the name of the Free Will Baptist Church of Morehead City.

Some of the members of the church who lived at Crab Point decided to start a mission there to try and reach their neighbors for Christ. This mission grew and later organized into the Crab Point Free Will Baptist Church on June 23, 1956.

Later that same year, another group left First Free Will Baptist Church of Morehead City and organized the Faith Free Will Baptist Church.

In September of 1956, Reverend and Mrs. S. Bullard moved to Morehead City to pastor the First Free Will Baptist Church. They worked here for six years and during this period the present brick auditorium (approximately 50' X 48') was built for the Glory of God. New pews and pulpit furniture were installed in the new auditorium,

indirect lighting, and a beautiful picture in the baptistery added to its beauty. Reverend W.E. Anderson, former pastor, became the First Associate Pastor of the First Free Will Baptist Church of Morehead City, N.C. He held this esteemed position until his death, February 9, 1958.

In August, 1958, Molly Barker became the first National Home Missionary from the First Free Will Baptist Church of Morehead City. She worked in Nogales, Arizona.

In July, 1960, the church voted unanimously not to endorse anything that violated the principle of local church autonomy. As a result of this vote, the church left the Eastern Conference and became a charter member of the Coastal Association on November 30, 1961.

Miss Mary Ellen Rice was the first foreign missionary the First Free Will Baptist Church sent from her midst. She left for Brazil in January, 1962 and returned in 1967. She served God faithfully in the state of Sao Paulo, Brazil.

The church purchased and remodeled the Nelson property, 910 Bridges Street. It is used for the parsonage. Three lots on Fisher Street and one on Bridges are owned by the church.

One of the sons of the church, Reverend J.W. Long, Jr., followed Reverend Bullard as pastor. During his two year ministry, many young men were saved and several of them attended the Free Will Baptist Bible College in Nashville, Tennessee.

Reverend Lewis Cambell, interim pastor, served the church for two months when Reverend Long resigned and before Reverend Luther Reed moved from Tennessee in 1964. Brother Reed is remembered for his love, courage, patience, and persistence. Example of these characteristics are: his winning the George R. (Sonny) Ballou family for the Lord.

Since Sonny's conversion, he has been a leader in the church and faithful supporter of the cause of Christ.

With Reverend and Mrs. Reed's encouragement and her church support, Molly Barker left in 1965 to serve the Lord in Uruguay, South America after a year of language study in Costa Rica.

Reverend Irvin Hyman followed Brother Reed as pastor. Reverend Hyman and wife ministered in Morehead City about four and a half years. They led the church in a building program. Two buildings, the Educational Building named for

A.E. Cannon and the Fellowship Hall named for C.H. Barker, were built on the Southeast corner of 10th and Fisher Streets. The church grew and a bus ministry was started. In June, 1972, Reverend William Reagan accepted the call to the First Free Will Baptist Church of Morehead City.

Many improvements have been made to the church facility. The steeple was covered with copper, a fire escape was added to the education building, rest rooms remodeled, new carpet placed in the auditorium and the pews padded. The heating went all electric and installed new central air conditioner for church auditorium. Along with these improvements, the outreach of the church has continued to increase as well. The radio ministry has been continued after several years of silence, the church bus was replaced by a van that was bought, and the missionary giving is at an all time high. The membership stands at 324 with a proposed budget of \$66,000.00 for the year 1980.

As we look back, our hearts are touched with God's blessings upon our little church. How He has worked among us! However, we must not be content to look back, we must look to the future and ask Him to continue to use us all for His Glory.

FULL TIME PASTORS

<i>Rev. A.H. Outlaw</i>	1919-1923
<i>Rev. Thomas Beamon</i>	1923-1928
<i>Rev. W.E. Everett</i>	1928-1932
<i>Rev. Luke Wetherington</i>	1932-1935
<i>Rev. W.E. Anderson</i>	1935-1947
<i>Rev. J.C. Griffin</i>	1947-1949
<i>Rev. J.A. Harris</i>	1949-1950
<i>Rev. T.C. Smith</i>	1950-1952
<i>Rev. Noah Brown</i>	1952-1956
<i>Rev. Seldon Bullard</i>	1956-1962
<i>Rev. J.W. Long, Jr.</i>	1962-1964
<i>Rev. Luther Reed</i>	1964-1967
<i>Rev. Irvin Hyman</i>	1967-1972
<i>Rev. William Reagan</i>	1972-1982
<i>Rev. Danny Howell</i>	1983-1986
<i>Rev. Mance. Cason</i>	1986-

*At this 75th Anniversary
we honor our Brother "Al McElmon"
1949-1979*

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Brother William Reagan left in May, 1972, to serve as a Home Missionary under the direction of the National Association of Free Will Baptist Home Mission Department.

While the pulpit committee was looking for a replacement, Reverend Freeman Edwards was our supply pastor to February, 1983, at which time the church called Reverend Danny Howell to serve as pastor. This was Brother Howell's first pastorate. He resigned January, 1986 to go to the Goshen Free Will Baptist Church.

Reverend Linwood Irock was called for a supply pastor until March, 1986.

On March 27, 1986, Reverend Mance R. Cason joined us as pastor and at this writing, our 90th Anniversary, he is still with us.

June, 1993 Reverend Parnell Aldridge, a graduate of Free Will Baptist Bible College, came to be an associate pastor under the leadership of Reverend Mance Cason. He wanted to get some experience in pastoring and administration. He works outside the church to support his family and is not compensated for serving in the above capacity.

*Along with Brother Cason and Brother Aldridge,
the church officers are as follows:*

Deacons listed are: James Wade Barefoot, Billy R. Cannon, Charles Creech, Paul W. Hansen, Carroll Hill, Steven Hunter, W.H. Marks, Jr., A.N. McElmon, A.N. McElmon, Jr., Bill Pratt, J.R. Swanson, and Ronald West.

Trustees are: James Wade Barefoot, Billy R. Cannon, Albert McElmon, Jr., Mike Simpson, and Frank Willis.

Church Clerk is Mrs. Ruby Barker, Treasurer is Mrs. Margaret Haddock with Mrs. Debra Hansen as Assistant, General Sunday School Superintendent is Bob Landrum with Albert McElmon, Jr. as Assistant, Mrs. Barbara Smith is Junior Sunday School Superintendent with Miss Mary Ellen Rice as Assistant.

Junior Church Directors are Mrs. Gloria Cannon and Mrs. Caroline Grant, C.T.S. Director is Brother Frank Willis.

Ms. Beverly Pasineau is the Church Pianist, Mrs. Janice Cason is the Church Organist, and Brother A.N. McElmon is Director of Music.

Sister Molly Barker is on the Mission Field in Uruguay still serving faithfully as a Missionary since August, 1958.

Since the writing of the 75th Anniversary, there have been several improvements to the Church property. There was a partition added in the Barker Building, all the windows in the Education Building were replaced, and Choir chairs were purchased in memory of Brother Joe Sharpe on May 5, 1990. Although there was a Bus Ministry started May, 1970, it faded out and the church, on March of 1980, put the bus up for sale for the price of \$510.00 and purchased a van. This van was traded for another one in 1988. With a drive to revive the Bus Ministry in 1989, the church voted to buy another bus. Then in 1994, a second bus was added of which is not in operation as of this writing. We now stand with two buses and one van. The largest investment in the last 22 years was the purchase of the property at 204 N. 10th Street for the sum of \$45,000.00. The house is being used as rental income to help pay the mortgage payments.

There is a drive to pay off this loan early and thus far \$15,833.40 has been received and paid on the principal above the monthly payments of \$298.00.

The church now owns seven city lots. One lot for the Parsonage, one lot for the Church and Education Building, one lot for the Barker and Cannon Buildings, three lots for parking on Fisher Street and one lot for the rental house on North 10th Street.

There is a committee working on a complete renovation of the church and other property.

We have a yearly budget of \$87, 130.00 with a total membership of 328.

Brother W.H. "Willie" Marks, Jr. has been a member of the church longer than anyone else presently on our church role.

Sister Sarah (Bruce) Rice, another one of our members, is the oldest person in age belonging to our church.

Our prayer is that we will be able to do more for the cause of Christ between now and our 100th Anniversary in 2004.

"I thank my God upon ever remembrance of you"
Philippians 1:3. Paul, expressing his love and feeling for the church at Philippi, with thanksgiving in his heart for each of them, described well mine and Janice's love, feelings, concern, and thankfulness for our church family and for each member that comprises it's body. Also, it is with a deep sense of gladness that we call Morehead City, N.C. our home.

It all began January 11, 1986. On that evening, we were interviewed by the Pulpit Committee. They conducted the interview in such a sweet Christian manner that it was obvious to us that this is a church that loves God, cares about each other, and wants to do God's will, as individuals and as a church. After preaching and worshipping with the church that first weekend, we knew also that this is a church with a fervent prayer life and stands for the fundamental preaching and teaching of God's word without compromise.

On March 27, 1986, we arrived in Morehead City with all of our belongings. Several people came to help unload our furniture and etc., and in just a few hours we were all set up for housekeeping and ready to assume our duties as pastor family. For more than eight and one-half years, it has been our honor, joy, and privilege to minister to the

precious members of our church and this community. It is our desire to minister to the needs of each and everyone and continue to send out the message of God's love, Christ's forgiveness of sin, and hope of eternal life to our beautiful Crystal Coast Community.

With all of our heart, we thank God for our salvation, second for calling us to serve Him and you. Once again, we want each of you, our church family, to know we love you and can truly say as Paul said, "I (we) thank my (our) God upon every remembrance of you (all)".

*Your Servants,
Pastor and Janice Cason*

It was November, 1946 and the only way I could get a date (being a US Marine) with the former Marie Rice, was to go with her to a small, white, wooden church on the corner of 10th Street. The First Free Will Baptist. I was a Baptist but I did not know anything about the Free Will part or doctrine (Brother Asa Cannon, Brother Charles Barker, and Brother Willie Marks explained this to me).

Mr. Carmack was throwing coal in the pot belly stove standing in front of the first pew in the church. I was raised in a cold water flat and I did know about this type of heat, but never in a church. Well, anyway, this started a perpetual act on my part to venture to 10th Street every Sunday and Wednesday or whenever the doors were open for services or maybe to see that pretty Miss Rice. Consequently, as time went by, the sixth pastor of the church, Rev. W.E. Anderson would keep my spiritual needs supplied by his good preaching. I suppose my concealed motive was Marie and with the quality (questionable) of being wise, on June 6, 1947 we were united in marriage and went off to New York. After ten months Brunette, Marie's sister, paid our way back to Morehead City. To this date no one has offered to send us back.

In the past 90 years, since the church was started, I am sure everything was not sugar and cream, but with tremendous, valuable men of God leading the group of believers starting in some homes with Rev. Denard Garner and Rev. L.C. Garner of Newport for about 15 years without salary built a congregation of 44 people. Then came the Revs. H.M. and Lizzie McAdams in a revival meeting stimulated this group to hire a full time pastor, the Rev. A.H. Outlaw and to this date on our 90th anniversary 16 more men of God have led us as Paul charged Timothy in II Timothy 4:2.

My prayer today is that the First Free Will Baptist Church will continue to press forward to the mark of the high calling and that I could be instrumental with all our members in leading other people to the knowledge of Christ.

I have seen preachers, missionaries, teachers, music directors, and other Christian workers raised up in this church. The Lord has blessed and is still blessing the faithful members that remain.

I love the Lord, I love the people, and I thank you for loving me.

A. N. McElmon

First Free Will Baptist Church is my family in Christ and is always there with their love to help carry my burdens and sorrows when I am in need. The spiritual and Bible teachings, along with the friendliness and love of the church family, led me to know that I had found my House of the Lord. May God continue to bless this Lord's House and the church family.

Virginia Rose

I enjoy the preaching of Pastor Cason. I enjoy the people who are all so friendly and open. I like being part of First Free Will Baptist Church. I feel since being saved that I am heading in the right direction. I really want to thank everyone who is a part of this, especially God.

Tim Cole

God has given me my mom and dad, my grandmother and grandfather, and my cat. He's given me food, a home, and friends to play with. He's given me my church so I can learn about Jesus. He is so nice to me.

*Kimberly Lewis
Age 7*

Of all the joys and blessings in my life, First Free Will Baptist in Morehead is certainly one of them. My heart warms when I reflect back to times in that church. Some of the best preaching, teaching, music, and friends! I never hear "Victory in Jesus" that I don't think about Mrs. Durley Salter. What a blessing!! Mrs. Letha Marks has touched many lives through her teaching and living God's Word! I think of all of you often and miss you so much.

*May God richly bless each and everyone of you as you spread the good news of our Lord.
(Philippians 4: 4-7)*

Essie Hayes Pulliam

We thank God for the change that has enlightened our lives, the peace and tranquillity that has taken place, and all the problems that Satan had made seem impossible to solve, became washed away by the blood and promise of Jesus who now resides in our hearts.

We have a new family that is loving and is such a joy to be with when we join together in prayer and praise God each church service. Faith and the love of Jesus will lead us home.

Bob and Virginia Burchfield

I guess I can thank our two girls, Tina and Renee, for getting us going to First Free Will Baptist Church. We were going to another church back in 1988. We let our girls go to Vacation Bible School at First Free Will Baptist that summer and they liked it so much we couldn't get them to go back to the other church. I thank God for the love the teachers gave our children then as well as now. After my heart attack in 1989, I couldn't understand why the Lord had kept me here. I was supposed to be dead. I believe the Pastor answered that question when he asked me to help on the bus. This was my chance to serve my Lord in a way that I could enjoy and do my best. I thank Brother Cason and the parents of our church for putting your trust in me. I thank my Lord for all my Christian friends and especially for Brother Mance Cason. All of you are very special to me and my family.

*May God Bless You All.
Frank Willis*

It is an honor to serve the Lord in a church that I love so much. I thank God that it is a Bible teaching and Bible preaching one. I can't imagine what my life would be like without it. I think it is fair to say it is my LIFE!!

Diane Thompson

Gloria Pittman Cannon came to this church at age 7 years. She was saved under the ministry of Noah Brown at age 12.

Billy R. Cannon came to this church in the year 1957. He was saved under the ministry of Seldon Bullard. Gloria and I were married here in 1962. Our daughter was saved and married in this church. She married Keith A. Buck.

We believe in the Free Will Baptist Doctrine. We fill each person, before they join a church, should be taught the doctrine of that church because it has a great influence on one's life as a Christian. Our grandson, Alen Buck, is in the Junior Department of our church.

We love the church for taking up so much time with the children of young ages. Thanks to the Sunday School Junior Department, the Junior Church Services, the V.B.S. Department, and C.T.S.

Billy and Gloria Cannon

My name is Renee Willis. I started going to our church when I was three. On Sunday, December 2, 1990, I accepted Jesus in my heart. I am thankful for the preacher. He has loaned his time to us so we could practice piano. He is very generous. I will always try to be as good as I can and obey God.

*Renee Willis
Age 9*

The church to me is a place where God's word is preached in accordance to the Bible. Also, no matter what happens in my life, I know that I have support from the church and encouragement from my church family. I love God and this church and I thank Him that I am a member of this church.

*Yours in Christ,
Milton Pratt*

I love God. He loves me. I thank him for my family.

*Thomas Guthrie
Age 7*

I am thankful for this church and the opportunity that was given me to work with the C.T.S. I was saved when I was eleven years old in a small church in Bogue. I have been a member of this church about six years. I think Rev. Mance Cason is the best pastor I have ever known. He truly cares for people and has helped me and my family when things looked pretty bad. We are very blessed to have him and Janice.

Julie Willis

As a member of First Free Will Baptist Church, I have loved my church and church family ever since I was a child. My church means so much to me. I am thankful to God for the love and guidance I have received here. I don't know where my life would have carried me if I had not been raised in this church. The devil has tried to spoil my life. He's tried his best to take me away from God and God's work. My mother prayed for me, but she has gone to be with Jesus. I need my church family to pray for me now. We must pray for each other. Don't let the devil win. Let's be careful what we say to each other. Don't discourage our church family. Let's build them up. I love our church and want it to grow. May God continue to guide us forever.

*Yours in Christ,
Wanda P. Willis*

First Free Will Baptist Church in Morehead City will always hold a special place in my heart. It is here that I accepted Jesus as my Lord and Savior when I was nine years old. Now twenty-one, I can still remember that wonderful day as if it were just last week. I always had loving support from all the church members and encouragement to always follow His lead. From great Sunday School teachers, to choir directors, to those who were shining examples of God's love and grace; I always found a smile and a leading influence. It is very important for churches to provide activities for its youth. There are too many things out in the world that do not provide wholesome fun for the youth. Our church always had activities of which the youth could be a part, and of that I am very thankful. This church provided learning as well as fellowship for me, a young believer, and for that I will always be grateful. I can thank the Lord for the foundation I received as a Christian at this church.

Anne H. Keene

I started going to the First Free Will Baptist Church in January, 1922 while I was just a small child. I remember some of the dear old Sunday School teachers that taught me about the Lord. I accepted the Lord as my Lord and Savior at an early age. I loved the church and its members and was faithful in attendance and the works down through the years.

Then I married in the Coast Guard family which took me away from my church by living in other states for several years. No other church seemed to take the place of my hometown church or its members. At retirement from the Coast Guard, we moved back home in 1946 and have been active in the church ever since. This church means so much to me and all the members are my family. I love you all. May the Lord continue to bless the ministry of the church in winning many more souls to the Lord is my prayer.

*God Bless You All,
Ruby Barker*

I learn about God and Jesus and stories about them. I like coming to church.

*Shane Cole
Age 7*

I love this church for two main reasons. First, because I have learned about our Savior, Jesus Christ. One of the many things I have learned is that whatever I do, Jesus will always love me. Secondly, I have met a few people who I believe will be very special friends for a life time. These are two of the many reasons why I love this church and the people in it.

*Wendy Hill
Age 12*

I have been a member of this church for forty years. I have met some of the sweetest people I have ever known. So many precious souls, past and present. I loved each and every one of them and I love each and every one of you. Knowing that we all love each other is a blessing to me. God always blesses this church and all who attends this church. My love to everyone.

*Love and Prayers,
Louise Swanson*

Jesus has given me my family and friends. Jesus is my friend. God has also given me food and drink.

*Megan Creech
Age 6*

In June 1951, we lived with our six month old baby daughter, Debbie, at Crab Point. My husband, Harry, was a marine stationed at Cherry Point. We started attending church at the First Free Will Baptist Church with our neighbors, and now dear friends, Al and Marie McElmon. Our pastor at that time was Pastor Smith of whom we have many fond memories. Harry sang in the choir while I, (Lorraine), and Debbie sat in the congregation. Debbie, recognizing her daddy, would speak out and say "Hi Da Da". One Sunday the pastor even carried her around while giving the sermon, but she still would wave and say "Hi" to daddy. So, it was decided to enclose the room next to the pulpit with a glass window and speaker system so Lorraine and Debbie could sit in there and listen and watch. Pastor Smith called it Debbie's room. Soon, more mothers and babies were joining us. We were discharged a year later and moved back to Michigan. This being our first church of our marriage, we have many wonderful memories of this church as we continued our walk with the Lord in our life. When we visit our wonderful friends Al and Marie, we also visit our first church. Thank you and God Bless you all.

Harry and Loraine Rees

This is what my church, our church, means to me. To begin with, I love my Sunday School class members and my teacher. Just being with them and learning and studying the Bible together has been wonderful. The music and singing in our church has been most enjoyable and up-lifting. Ever since I have been saved and became a member of our church, I feel that each and every day has been a blessing to me.

*God Bless Each and Everyone,
Laura Mildred Bell*

I have lived across the street from the church since I was born, but I started going to the church in 1988. I was about 5 years old then. I started going because I went to Bible School and liked it. My first teacher there was Mrs. Debbie Hill. This church is very special to me because I got saved in it. I love everyone in it very much. I love Pastor Cason too!! I practice the piano at the church. I just want to say thank you for letting me use the church piano.

*Tina Willis
Age 11*

Coming to the First Free Will Baptist Church has meant a lot to me. The sermons that Reverend Cason gives are powerful, spiritual, up lifting, and at times, sends your soul searching.

When you go to a church like that, it gives you these feelings. You know you are in one of God's churches. That is why I have chosen the First Free Will Baptist Church as my church.

Sherry Lynn Cole

The church has meant a lot to me because I can go there each and every Sunday to be with my Christian friends and worship God for all that He has blessed me with. I have been a member of this church for over twenty years. He has given me so much to be thankful for in my life. I thank Him every day of my life.

Mamie Lawrence

We love our church. We love our pastor and his wife. We enjoy our church and all the people. We are glad to be a part of the 90th Anniversary. God bless this church and all.

God Bless

Bill and Faye Gibble

*The First Free Will Baptist Church of Morehead
is my family, my life. It is my source of strength
and reason of my joy.*

*I received Christ on February 2, 1970, just a
couple of days after my wife, Cora Lee was saved
under Preacher Hyman. You always have a
special feeling for the man that leads you to a
decision like this. Cora Lee and I joined the
church and together we grew in Christ, learned
more about his teaching, and joined in fellowship
with the church family. Within a short time, I was
serving the Lord on the Board of Deacons with my
wife as my support. I have also served as Sunday
School Superintendent and as a chairman of the
Board of Deacons.*

*Another preacher I had at First Free Will Baptist
Church was Preacher Reagan and we had some
wonderful preaching and teaching under him. The
ten years he spent at our home church will be
remembered and cherished.*

*Preacher Cason, who is the preacher I have now,
has been a vital part of the Pratt family. He has
been with us through heaven and hell. During the
past July of 1994, Cora Lee, my wife of 42 years,
passed away.*

Preacher Cason preached the funeral. The love of God and my church family, and Preacher Cason as a friend and source of spiritual guidance, has made this very difficult time in my life bearable. With God's grace and the prayers from my church family, I am able to go on knowing I'll be with her again; this time for eternity in a much better place.

Being a child of God has influenced my every decision, personal and professional. Following in His steps has not always been the easy way, but has been the right way. I have given my time and talents to God and to the works of the First Free Will Baptist Church of Morehead, but I have received so much in return. I have truly found that you can't out give God.

*Yours in Christ,
Bill Pratt*

I have been a member 24 years. I have enjoyed the Sunday School Classes, Ladies Circle, C.T.S, Revivals and church meetings. Just being in the presence of Christian friends and hearing God's word, I count it all a privilege.

June Willis

God has given me a home, people who care about me and love me, friends, family, Christians and the whole wide world. He's given me food, drink, and clothing. He's given me my mom who is Lois, my dad who is Chris, and my sister who is Haylei, all whom I love very much.

Onesty Norris

Age 8

God gave me a home. He gave me food. He gave me a family. He gave me a life and he created me.

Lucas Murdock

Age 7

God gave me a life. He gave me a wonderful family. God gave me a home and clothing, good food to eat, a bed to sleep on, and things to play with. God also gave me a talent that I can use, and a fabulous sister. I like what the Lord gave me.

Aubry Hanson

Age 8

My mother was saved in a tent meeting during a revival held by Mrs. Lizzie McAdams. She then started regularly attending church and took Prent, Charlene, and myself. We had to go to all the services on Sunday and Wednesday nights unless we were sick. I always loved to go with her and went also to the Ladies Aid meetings even though I was very small.

In 1941, I was saved during one of Preacher Bill Anderson's sermons. I always remember Preacher Bill Anderson. We loved him so much. He preached a lot of hellfire and brimstone sermons. I saw the love of God through my dear mother and Grandmother and I heard about the wrath of God from Preacher Bill. It was the wrath of God that brought me to the love of God. And Oh! how much He did love me. I praise God everyday, especially as I get older, that He in His compassion saved me from my sins, cleanses me daily, and keeps me in His care even though I have never done one thing to deserve it. I deserved hell. I was a sinner and I repented of my sins and won the victory. After I was saved, many of the older ladies and gentlemen in the church nurtured me and loved me and taught me about Jesus and His love. I thank the Lord for those old saints. Many have already gone on for their rewards. Some of them are still waiting to go Home. The ones that are still here I thank you with all my heart and the

ones already gone on I will praise the Lord with them when I get there.

I met my husband in F.W.B. League one time when he was a visitor. Years later in March, 1951, we were married in First Free Will Baptist Church by Rev. J.C. Griffin and then in 1959, my husband was saved. He was baptized by Rev. Seldon Bullard. I hope this is not too long to add that when I was growing up, my mother had many preachers in our home to eat. They all enjoyed coming to our house as we enjoyed their company too. The Free Will Baptist preachers always had a good sense of humor when they were not in the pulpit. Like Brother Mance, they were serious when they stepped up there to preach. The most important events in my life took place in this church and it holds an important place in my heart.

Fern Salter West

I love God. God loves me. I hope that I go to heaven. God is proud of me.

Alisha West

Age 7

When I began coming to the First Free Will Baptist Church, I enjoyed the fellowship and all the love that was shown by the members. I accepted the Lord into my life and a new life began. I joined the church (the old church) on May 12, 1957. I watched and helped in all the ways I could as this church here today was being built. I love the church and its people. We are never to old to learn more about God's Word. My prayer is that I will be able to come and do more for the church as long as I can.

Dot Pospisil

The First Free Will Baptist Church is the church I have stayed with the longest. I have been baptized in this church. This church is the first church I have attended that I can call home.

Jonathan Morgan

Age 13

I Karen Willis Hamilton, would be honored to have my testimony recorded for the church. As far back as I can remember, this church was a part of my life. From a tiny baby it has touched my live and now it is a part of my children's lives! A lot of memories are hazy now, but there are some that remain clear.

All the years of Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, the crafts, napkin wrapped peanut butter crackers and Pepsi! Not to mention the dear sweet ladies that passed them out. I remember all the egg hunts, fall festivals, and Sunday morning bus rides! I can't forget the wonderful preachers and their wives. The choir's music always did and does bring tears of joy. It doesn't matter where I go, there is no other like it.

It makes me ashamed to know all the years I came to church I never nailed down my salvation! It wasn't until my mother and Danny Howell invited me to hear Dr. Joe Ange in May of 1983. All those years of resisting the Holy Spirit melted away from the heat of the message on Hell! I'll never forget Danny Howell and Joe Ange waiting for me at the alter! THE MOST WONDERFUL DAY OF MY LIFE!! My life was turned around and I have never, ever wanted to go back! Blessing after blessing has been my life since my

salvation!! I thank the Lord for this church on Bridges Street. It will always be "my little church", no matter where I go! May it light the way for others.!

*Till We Meet in Heaven!
Karen Willis Hamilton*

I have really enjoyed going to this church for the last ten years. The people have really meant a lot to me. The teachers over the years have taught me a lot of different things.

William Lloyd Davis

I thank God for bringing me to First Free Will Baptist Church. Through the teaching and preaching of the true word of God, it gave me a chance for salvation and a family I can depend on when ever prayer is needed.

Portia Robinson

The memories I have of this church is short, but sweet. They began to build the day I helped Brother Mance and Mrs. Janice move here. The first person I remember meeting here was Mrs. Margaret Haddock. She came over to the parsonage being her normal self, which is simply wonderful, and worked hard enough to put ten men to shame.

I graduated from Free Will Baptist Bible College in May of 1993 and moved my family here to Morehead City July 1, 1993. When I helped Brother Mance move here, I never dreamed that I would have the opportunity to assist him in his ministry here. The special times that Brother Mance and I have witnessed together, shared together, prayed together, and cried together will truly be memories that I will carry with me all through my life. The special times that Brother Mance and Mrs. Janice opened their home to me and my family and shared those wonderful dinners with us, and there have been many, will serve to be an example we will try to follow in building memories with others. There are so many fine folks in this church who have shared, prayed, fed, and loved us like we were their very own children. This church has contributed to building some of the greatest memories of my life.

Of all the wonderful memories that I have here, the most dear to me are those of seeing new souls born into the Kingdom of God.

My family loves each and every one of you and we are so thankful to be a part of this wonderful ministry.

Rev. Parnell Aldridge

This church has been my source of spiritual strength since I was twelve years old. I have had the privilege to serve in different ways; Auxiliary President, Sunday School Teacher, League, C.T.S., and the Emma Marks Circle. Most of all, it has been a place to worship and hear the preaching of the word.

The music has been a real blessing to me under the leadership of Al McElmon. I think we have the best. It is always a source of inspiration. I also enjoy the musicians, Beverly Pasineau and Janice Cason. God bless this church is my prayer.

Letha Marks

This church has meant a lot to me. I think of the day I was saved, the Booster Band, and the Junior Choir. I also think of the Christmas Cantatas and the Easter Cantatas. I remember the Bible lessons that were taught by our devoted teachers that brought the lessons every Sunday, even when we were not paying attention and misbehaving. I remember when the bus ministry was started and how many new faces it brought to our church and the ministry that was shared to my friends and classmates that may have never heard the gospel without our church.

*Al McElmon III
Age 11*

As we commemorate the ninetieth year of our church and recognize all that it has accomplished through these many years, I realize that its success has been motivated and directed by our sovereign, loving God.

Secondly, through the dedicated efforts of spiritually called pastors, who labored unselfishly through these nine decades, preaching, convicting hearts and leading to the saving of souls. I am thankful for this and also for the Godly layman who, as Deacons, faithful Sunday School teachers, and the many other critical positions of leadership, has influenced and encouraged over this period of time.

Personally, I am very thankful and have been greatly blessed through our church which has saved and served our family for five generations. Beginning with my grandmother, "Rena", both parents, four brothers, and my sister, my wife and our four children and a granddaughter who have all benefited from its ministry.

It was here, as a child, I was taught and led to the Lord, and nineteen years ago when I rededicated my life to serving God.

We have all shared in a love from fellow members, that cannot be measured, who have given us their earnest prayers and encouragement through the years.

I am thankful to our heavenly Father who has sustained this loving church of worship, and I pray that it will remain strong and continue to grow until our Savior returns.

Ron West

On April 6, 1975, I walked the aisle of the First Free Will Baptist Church and rededicated my life to the Lord. That day I acquired a new family of Christian brothers and sisters. By the wonderful grace of God, our Father, they have shared my sorrows and my joys. My Christian family in this church has laughed with me, cried with me, and most importantly prayed for me all these years. They, who are this church, have helped me, more than words can say, to draw closer to my Lord. The buildings would be just that-buildings-without the people in it who love and worship Jesus Christ, our wonderful Savior and Lord.

Mary E. West

The 90th anniversary of the First Free Will Baptist Church means so much to me, not only as a member of 52 years, but as a Christian. I gave my heart to the Lord when I was 12 years old. Since then, I have tried to the very best of my ability to serve the Lord and the church. Al and I were married here 47 years ago. Our three children were brought up in this church. We have made many friends, some in the church and some visitors. I believe the church to be a very fundamental church that believes in the birth, death, resurrection and the return of the Lord. We have had some very dedicated ministers. Many of the elderly people have been an inspiration to me through the years. In serving the Lord as a Sunday School Teacher, Superintendent, Choir member, etc., I have tried to remember what I read over the doors of our old church. "If every member were just like me, what would my Sunday School be, and if every member were just like me, what would my church be?" A good attitude and being faithful are two teachings that I feel should be a part of every Christian's testimony. I hope that the children of today can be as proud of the church as I have always been. My favorite scripture is Joshua 1:9 "Have not I commanded thee, be strong and of a good courage, be not

afraid and neither be thou dismayed, for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest".

Marie McElmon

God love you all. I love our little church. Our church is little, but we have some of the nicest people there are in any big church. I should know because of the luck I have had in the past two and a half years. Our church family is there when you need them.

There is one thing that is always true and that is how nice it is to know kind people at First Free Will Baptist Church. The church where there's lots of love for others.

Annie McIntosh

The church means a lot to me. My church family has always been with me through the good times and the not so good times. I love each one in a special way and thank the Lord I have such a family.

*In His Love,
Vonda Pratt Guthrie*

The First Free Will Baptist Church means so much to me because it is a Bible teaching church and also a loving church. Everyone seems to be concerned about each other. I came to be a part of this church through Bible Study and soon learned that you learn so much from the elderly and they have taught me a lot. I think that if the young people would take time to talk to the elderly and listen to them, they would learn a lot. Mrs. Mildred West really helped me to understand a lot of things and was there when I needed to talk. We would always talk about the Bible and she would explain what it meant when I had a question. She was an inspiration to me. I miss her very much.

The pastor has been an inspiration to me as well. It seems God speaks to him when I need to talk to someone and he always calls. During all of my adversities, which has been a lot, and when I was at my lowest point of my life, the pastor would always call and say God had spoke to him to call me. We would talk and have prayer. I would feel a lot better. So, Pastor Cason please know how much your help and thoughtfulness are appreciated and how very special you are. I know God speaks through people. I am so thankful for being a part of First Free Will Baptist Church and I like to thank God and each and everyone for their prayers and concern during the illness of

my mother and father, Wade's illness, and my own. Thanks for your concern and thoughtfulness.

Now I would like to thank God first of all for me being a Christian and also for Wade, my children, grandchildren and all my family. I accepted Christ when I was 13 years old. God has been by my side during all the adversities and my prayer is that I will always handle them in a way that will please Him. I know that people watch how you handle yourself during these hard times, and I hope that I will always handle them right. I want to thank God for Wade and for what he means to me. Through your prayers and God's help he is a walking miracle because three doctors told me he was very lucky to be alive. That was an answer to prayer and a praise item!!! I truly thank God for that.

There are wonderful days that I wish would last, but the sunny days are followed by cloudy ones. I have problems, troubles, and worries. When things get really bad, I know that it is God who must help me find the courage to see things through. As I turn to Jesus for compassion, I look

to Him for fortitude. The Bible says in Deuteronomy 31:8 "And the Lord, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed". I am thankful that we have a God who is always there for us, to give us the strength to face things that we never thought we could. In Psalm 46:1 it says, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble". I have a lot of praise items. In 1965 I was in a car wreck and was almost killed. I stayed in the hospital a month. My two children were with me and they didn't even get a scratch on them. Also, I have an eye disease. I am supposed to give up driving, looking at T.V., and reading. Praise God I have not had to give up any so far. That is a praise item! It also says in Romans 8:28 "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose". So, I am so thankful to have a loving God to look to and who understands me and sees me through all the hard times. God has been good to me and I thank Him for that. I always want to do His will and have Him first in my life. That's my prayer. May God bless each and everyone at First Free Will Baptist Church.

*Love in Christ,
Brenda Barefoot*

My first memories go back to the nursery and having cookies and Kool-aid while being taught Bible stories. My primary years were spent in the basement where I remember Mrs. Barker teaching each Sunday. The Barker and Cannon building were completed as I became a junior and my next few years were spent there. I remember the new building, it was so nice to have the space.

During my teen years, our class was held upstairs in the church. These years I remember well. Preacher Reagan was here and boy was he strict. He only seemed to have one way of doing things and it was his way. I questioned him time after time about why we did things and why we seemed to have so many rules. As I grew older, I understood the way he thought and appreciate the time he spent with us as teens. After high school, I think it finally hit me what the church is.

The church is not the nursery, basement, or back buildings; it is the people. The people we have are our church and we are a family. A church family is so important when growing up and I am proud of mine. The most important part in my life is that my parents made sure I was at church and more than that, they were too. The example that

they set made me realize what being a Christian is all about. I thank God for my parents and I remember well the night I asked my mom to go to the alter with me as my dad led the singing. Thanks Mom and Dad for being there.

Albert McElmon, Jr.

In the year of 1953 during the week of July the 3rd, I came to a Brother Hood meeting with my oldest brother. I enjoyed the meeting very much. There were about 25 members at that meeting the best I can remember. Brother A.C. Cannon was the president then and our Sunday School Teacher. Brother Al was the choir leader then. He has done a fantastic job. At the end of the meeting I was invited back.

That was how my wife and I got started in this church. I was not a Christian at that time either. At that time, Brother Noah Brown was the pastor at the First Free Will Baptist Church on the corner of 10th and Bridges Street. I nor Ruby, my

wife, was a Christian then. One Sunday morning at the worship service, Pastor Noah Brown read John 3:16. It said for God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten son to die on the old rugged cross and shed his precious blood that I might not go to a burning hell for ever and ever. I did not go up at the invitation. So, I went back the next Sunday. The message was the crucifixion of my Lord and Savior. The Holy Spirit spoke to my heart and told me to come to the altar and receive Jesus Christ as my Savior. I knew, or thought, that was my last chance. I was saved before I even went up to the altar. That's where God forgave me all of my sins and covered them with His precious blood. That was the first time I had ever been happy. Not one time have I ever regretted that decision.

This church has been my life every since. I love my brothers and sisters in the Lord. They mean so much to me. We have had some wonderful pastors who preached the Word of God. I want to thank God for our present pastor. I believe Pastor Cason and his wife live what they preach. I love you both. You both are a blessing to my wife and me.

I have been a member here for forty-one years. I love all my brothers and sisters. Thank God for each of you.

God bless each of you.

Stephen O. Hunter, Sr.

I am going to start back on November 24, 1993. I went to work on that day as usual. I thought I was a perfectly, healthy person. That day, November 24, 1993, my whole life was changed.

I worked in Morehead City and Newport that day. It was about time for lunch, so I stopped at a local restaurant in Morehead. I remember going in to eat. As I was getting ready to go, everything turned dark to me. I sat there for a few minutes; then got up to go pay the cashier at the register when everything turned dark again. At that time, I passed out, fell backwards, and fell to the floor. When I fell, I hit the concrete floor receiving a six inch base skull fracture. I bled bad from my nose, mouth, and right ear. I was taken to Carteret General and then to Craven Regional Medical Center where I was kept for ten days. Then I was sent home. I lost my memory of anything for 34 days.

I have been under the care of three doctors for the last eleven months. I have had two C.A.T. scans and one M.R.I. The doctors have never diagnosed what happened to me. I received some permanent brain damage, lost 80% hearing in my right ear, and 60% hearing in my left ear. I do not have any taste or smell.

I want to thank everyone in our church for all the prayers, cards, and visits that I have had during my illness. I know there was a purpose or reason for what happened to me, and I thank the Lord for prayer and people we have in our church and for what they have done for me.

Romans 10:13, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved". Matthew 11:28, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest".

*Your Brother in Jesus Christ,
Wade Barefoot*

It is a real joy to be part of our church's 90th anniversary celebration. Because duty calls elsewhere, it is impossible to be present, but I will be there with you in spirit. I praise the Lord for

those who worked so hard to establish a Free Will Baptist church in Morehead City and those who continued to work to keep it open through the years. Because of their faithfulness and dedication, I was able to hear the gospel there in 1948 and was born again as a result of it.

God used the pastors, Sunday School teachers and faithful members to teach me God's word and instill in me a love for His Word by living the Christian life before me, setting the example for me to follow.

Because of their faithfulness and those who still labor on today, the church being a spiritual anchor for me, many have heard the Gospel and have been saved in Uruguay, South America.

I count it a real blessing to say the First Free Will Baptist Church is my home and where my brothers and sisters in Christ meet regularly. The bond of Christian love holds us together as a family no matter the distance that separates us.

May God ever bless and keep the First Free Will Baptist Church a lighthouse in the Morehead area,

rescuing lost souls, teaching God's Word and holding firm to Christian principles until Jesus' return.

Molly Barker

As I contemplate on trying to write what this church means to me, it seems that words can't come close to expressing my feelings. Many times when you talk to people about church, they think about buildings. They couldn't be more wrong! The "church" is the bride of Christ comprised of many wonderful, loving, faithful, sacrificing saints who have given of themselves for many years! The "church" is the people, who they are and what they stand for. Thank God for this church!

It was in the spring of 1984, that Albert and Deanna McElmon first asked us if we were attending any specific church. We of course said no and they invited us to come and visit their church. Albert even said that he and Deanna would sing a song for us. So, Bob and I took them up on their offer. We took our three children and visited the church. One of our most precious recollections was of how warm and loving the people were and how they made us feel at home. Well, we tried several other churches, but the Lord seemed to lead us back to First Free Will Baptist Church in Morehead City. I can see now why God wanted us here and I thank Him for leading us here

There are many fond memories of our church. I remember Mr. Al and Mrs. Marie having us over for Sunday dinner when we first came to the church, Brother Danny Howell, who was pastor at the time we joined, having a young married couples class at his home and enjoying the fellowship there with other couples as well as learning the biblical standards for married couples, the Bible Study we used to have at the home of Mrs. Bruce Rice, the dedication of Bethany to the Lord when she was born (not to mention that when she was born half the church was at the hospital), and most importantly Camp Albemarle where all of our children have gone every summer and where Charles and Dawn accepted Christ. Robbie accepted Christ after a service one evening in the church not too long after that (he was not able to attend Camp Albemarle with Charles and Dawn that summer).

Presently, Brother Mance Cason is our pastor. However, he is more than that to our family; he is a friend that has been there through thick and thin, a man that has always instructed us by the Word of God, a man who has laughed and cried with us, a man who has prayed with us, and most of all, a man who has always given of himself, never once thinking about his needs but of our needs. He's truly been an example for us to see how one can and should follow in the footsteps of Jesus.

There are many people and events that have affected my life and the lives of my family. Knowing that your church family is always there for you and you can count on them for support has always meant a lot to me. The prayers, the laughter, the tears, Vacation Bible School meetings and other meetings, the Missionary Conferences, Revivals, Choir Cantatas, Junior Choir Cantatas, Christmas plays, Church picnics, Sunday dinners in the Barker Building, inspiring messages from the pulpit that convict you to the point that you do make changes in your life, etc.. All these things are what make up a "church" and my church is all these things and means everything to me.

May God bless each and every one of you in His special way. All of you have touched my heart deeply and have caused me to move yet one step closer to living my life like Jesus has taught us. Thank you for always being there and for your prayers. Truly, the presence of the Lord is in this place.

Love in Christ,

Jane Landrum

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